



**-National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior**

Jewel Cave  
National Monument

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## Jewel Cave National Monument News Release

Release Date: **July 27, 2015**

For Immediate Release

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### **Jewel Cave Staff Address Safety Concerns on the Scenic Tour Route**

Custer, SD – The staff at Jewel Cave National Monument are implementing a new safety strategy for the Scenic Tour, the Park's most popular Ranger guided cave program. In the last two years, there have been two accidents involving small children along the tour route. The current tour structure was installed approximately 43 years ago and was designed and built to the specifications of that time period.

*"The safety of all who visit Jewel Cave and especially of our youngest visitors is paramount to the staff at Jewel Cave and for the National Park Service. The safety strategy includes temporary measures for the tour along with upgrading the physical characteristics of the tour route platforms and walkways. The additions to the physical structure will provide the necessary safety measures to better prevent accidental falls from occurring. The Park is dedicated to making the tour route safer for the enjoyment of all Park visitors"* stated Acting Superintendent Larry Sandarciero.

The safety strategy includes implementation of the following temporary measures:

- Children five and under will not be allowed to participate on the Scenic Tour.
- Parents may not carry a child of any age. All tour participants must be able to navigate the one hour and twenty minute tour route unassisted.

These temporary measures will remain in effect until the tour route physical additions are complete.

Along with the temporary restrictions above, the Park is actively working to mitigate hazards by adding physical barriers to the tour structure in order to make the route safer. The Park has begun enclosing platforms with barrier materials and will be adding rails in areas where they are needed. This is an ongoing project and will continue until the project is complete.

Additionally as part of the strategy, the Park will be working on providing comprehensive visitor safety messages and displays to better represent the physical difficulty and hazards of the Scenic Tour. Lastly, the Park is working to provide additional Park Ranger led accessible tours and program options for Visitors who are unable to go on a tour in the cave but still want a cave experience.

The Scenic Tour structure is scheduled for complete replacement and should begin the design phase of the project in early 2017 with an estimated completion date of Spring 2019.


For more information regarding this press release or to speak to the Acting Superintendent, please call 605-673-8302 or email at [larry\\_sandarciero@nps.gov](mailto:larry_sandarciero@nps.gov).

For more information about Jewel Cave, visit the Monument online at [www.nps.gov/jeca](http://www.nps.gov/jeca). For additional planning assistance, visitors are also welcome to contact park staff at 605-673-8300 or [jeca\\_interpretation@nps.gov](mailto:jeca_interpretation@nps.gov).

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